

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

AID-05 IO-10 EB-07 COME-00 /076 W

----- 122685

R 030825Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5972

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 1121

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, BG, IN

SUBJECT: INDO-BANGLADESH MARITIME BOUNDARY: ONE LAST TRY?

REF: DACCA 0878

1. BENGALIEE FOREIGN SECRETARY FAKHRUDDIN AHMED LEFT DACCA FOR NEW DELHI ON MARCH 1 FOR WHAT ACTING INDIAN DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER DIXIT DESCRIBED AS QTE A LAST TRY UNQTE FOR A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT OF THE MARTIME BOUNDARY ISSUE NOW PLAGUING INDO-BENGALIEE RELATIONS. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS' LEGAL ADVISOR, ITS DIRECTORS-GENERAL FOR THE SUB-CONTINENT AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, A YYDROGRAPHER AND A GEOGRAPHER.

2. ACCORDING TO DIXIT, THIS EFFORT RESULTS FROM THE INTERVENTION OF PRESIDENT MUJIBUR RAHMAN. THE INDIANS HAD BEEN ABOUT TO DELIVER THE LETTER TO THE DACCA REPRESENTATIVE OF ASHLAND OIL AS DIXIT HAD SAID THEY WERE PLANNING TO DO (SEE REFTTEL). HOWEVER, BEFORE DOING SO, THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER HAD LET THE PRESIDENT KNOW OF THIS INTENTION, AND SHEIKH MUJIB ASKED THAT THIS STEP BE DEFERRED PENDING ONE MORE TRY AT RESOLUTION. THE LETTER, THEREFORE, IS CONFIDENTIAL

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PIGEONHOLED FOR THE MOMENT AND THE BENGALIEES ARE IN

NEW DELHI.

3. DIXIT SAID THE HE IS NOT SANGUINE THAT THE CURRENT MEETING WILL SUCCEED WHERE OTHERS HAD FAILED. HE SAID THAT SHORTLY BEFORE THE DELEGATION LEFT, HE HAD RECEIVED A CALL TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE FROM SHEIKH FAZLUL HAQ MONI, NEPHEW AND, INCREASINGLY, CONFIDANT OF THE PRESIDENT. DIXIT SAID THAT AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION, SHEIKH MONI CONCLUDED BY SAYING, "OUR POSITION WILL BE TOO RIGID." DIXIT EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT EVEN THOUGH THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE GIVE IN THE BENGALLEES POSITION, THE INDIANS ARE WILLING TO MAKE ONE MORE TRY BEFORE ACTING UNILATERALLY.

4. COMMENT: THE INDIANS' WILLINGNESS TO AGREE TO A FURTHER MEETING SUGGESTS SOMETHING OF THE DELICACY OF THEIR POSITION HERE. BENGALLEE SENSITIVITIES VIS-A-VIS INDIA CONTINUE TO GROW, ALSO SPURRED BY OTHER ISSUES. THE CRITICISM IN INDIA OVER THE RECENT CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES HAS SAT UNEASILY WITH BENGALLEES. MOREOVER, THERE IS A GROWING APPREHENSION HERE THAT INDIA IS PREPARING TO PLACE TH FARAKKA BARRAGE IN OPERATION, POSSIBLY WHEN THE SNOW-MELT FROM THE HIMALAYAS BEGINS (THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF STRANGE AND SUDDEN FLUCTUATIONS OF WATER LEVELS IN THE RIVERS FED BY THE GANGA, AND THE RUMOR IS CURRENT THAT THE INDIANS ARE TESTING THE BARRAGE FOR EARLY OPERATION); UNLESS A DECISION ON SHARING RIVER WATERS IS FOUND, SUCH A UNILATERAL ACTION WILL PLACE A FURTHER STRAIN ON RELATIONS. THERE IS EVEN A MEASURE OF WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE RECENT LIFTING OF THE AMERICAN EMBARGO ON ARMS TO INDIA AND PAKISTAN, NOTWITHSTANDING MFA'S LOW-KEY AND DELAYED CHARACTERIZATION OF THE STEP AS "REGRETTABLE", SINCE IT IS SEEN AS COUNTERING INDIAN PRETENSIONS IN SOUTH ASIA. IN LIGHT OF THE UNCERTAIN ATMOSPHERE IT CONFRONTS HERE, INDIA IS APPARENTLY PREPARED TO EXERCISE PATIENCE; HOW FAR IT EXTENDS BEYOND THE PRESENT EFFORT AT COMPROMISE REMAINS TO BE SEEN. DIXIT REMINDS US THAT THE LETTER IS ONLY PIGEON-HOLED.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** BOUNDARY DETERMINATION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, BOUNDARY CLAIMS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 MAR 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** RowellE0  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Drafter:** n/a  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**Reference:** 75 DACCA 0878  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** INDO-BANGLADESH MARITIME BOUNDARY: ONE LAST TRY?  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PBOR, BG, IN  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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